1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Saramacca

Finally, we must

128 explain that in rendering the plural of native words, we
• [93] have not employed the terminal "-s" that makes the plural in English, for in this regard we have followed the usage of Saramacca tongo.

A

104 *a*, he, she.

Abina, an important female ancestor. The name may be a modification of *Abena*, a woman's Tuesday name (see under *Afi*). In one village on the Saramacca, a dance known only there, called the *bisia*, is said to have been taught by a female ancestor during the "running away time." This fact may have bearing on its origin, as it may point to an ancestor who had come from the Benin (Nigerian) kingdom. The people of Benin are known as the *Bini*.

aboma, boa constrictor.

adiosi, goodbye. From the Portuguese.

adji-boto, a game of counters. This is played in Suriname as it is in the Caribbean, and in Africa. *Adji* is a Dahomean word. In Paramaribo, among the Awka Bush Negroes, and in the Caribbean, the Ashanti name for the game, *wari*, is employed.

Afi, "day name" for a girl born on Friday. The corresponding Friday name for a boy is *Kofi*. These day names are found in bush and town in Suriname. They are met with in Jamaica and names like *Kofi* (Cuffy), *Kwaku* (Quacoo), *Kwasi* (Quashi), are known in the United States. These day names exist among the peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, where they are definitely associated with the soul, in the same manner as they are in Suriname.

Afrika, Africa. This is the Saramacca pronunciation of the word. While known on the river, it is less used than the expression *neng'e konde*, literally, "Negro kingdom." The word *konde* is used interchangeably for kingdom and village. The word *to*, for example, in Dahomey, is used in the same way.

Afrikete, a Saramacca goddess, whose origin is Dahomean. In Dahomey her genealogy differs from the one given in Suriname. Dahomeans say she is the daughter of *Agbe* and *Naete*, gods of the sea.

agida, the great drum of the Saramacca trio of drum types. In Paramaribo, when the earth spirits are called, a spirit named *Agida* is invoked as one of the earth pantheon.

ago, ancestors. It is said in Dahomey that among the ancient inhabitants this Saramacca meaning was known.

agosu, name given a child born feet foremost. The same name is given such children in Dahomey and in Haiti.

Akuntamasu, the god of the ant hill. A Gold Coast name.

akwa, see *kra*.

ambo, an exclamation said to be a contraction of the phrase "by my mother's womb."

Amusi, name of Dahomean derivation.

Anansi, spider. *Anansi* is the trickster in the cycle of stories which bear his name. The *Anansi* stories on the Gold Coast and in the New World are like the Br'er Rabbit stories in the United States. In the New World, aside from

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193 The individual words are strung together with very loose grammatical construction, varying with the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. The nouns and verbs have no regular order; instead they are twisted around for convenience and emphasis. The implied meaning is usually not difficult to grasp.

We have resorted to arbitrary spellings, as the Bush Negroes possess no written language (see Appendix A), and the phonetic transcription of their speech is a task for an expert in linguistics. A few words have conventionalized forms adopted by previous writers, such as talkee-talkee, pronounced more nearly "tahki-tahki." The names of certain villages also, have a conventional spelling because they appear in the reports of the Dutch government. Examples of these are Gansee (Gan zay) and Lombe (Lom bay). Djuka is pronounced Djukah by the Aucaner.

197 The only difference between the Bush Negro's talkee-talkee and its use by the other natives of the colony is that the former have many words peculiar to themselves, such as the names of their gods and their implements. In addition to this common language, spoken by almost everyone in the colony, the Saramaccaners have a tribal language of their own. It is known as *deepee-talkee* (deep talk), or *odo, Saramacca tongo* or *Cromanti.*

In this language, which the Town Negroes and Indians cannot understand, is preserved a saga of the slave rebellion. It recounts the skirmishes and pitched battles, and the fate of the brave leaders who raided the plantations of the Dutch masters. It tells how they magically escaped the white man's bullets by the potency of their obeiahs. It ends with the white

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hook: *tukusi* (odo or Indian)
knee band: *sepu* (odo or Indian)
paddle for washing knee bands: *sepu pow*

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In making phrases and sentences, the verbs are not conjugated at all:

"Anga a killa me"—"I am hungry" (Hunger is killing me).
"Me nanga me ooma wannee bahkra fu makee sweetee muffo na da meh oso"—"I and my woman want the white man to come eat (make sweet mouth) at my house."
"Bahkra go nanga leeba"—"White man goes up the river."

A few sentences of talkee-talkee follow:

Neti de cun mekki we letti fai you.	Night is coming; light us a fire.
Go sidom en fu teli me fa you nanga you matti ben waka.	Sit down, and tell me how you and your friend have travelled.
Me fredui taki you de kori you srifi.	I am afraid you are fooling yourself.
Sam you sa do nah?	What will you do now?
Wo, me sah?	Who, myself? (Who, me?)
Me no sa tan dia.	I do not want to stay here.
Me prak seri fo go na Lombe.	I think I am going to Lombe.
Suma pekein data?	Whose child is that?
You wanni screevee wan breevee fu you matti.	You want to write a letter for your friend.
You savvy talkee-talkee, massra?	Do you understand talkee-talkee, master?
Pekein so, me savvy, matti.	I understand a little, friend.
Ah go kissi fissi.	I go to catch fish.
Tamara Ah sa go honti.	Tomorrow I shall go hunting.

/275 cont./

539 going to hit thee." She stayed immobile without answering. He puts the pail down on the ground, he hits her gbo! Kyin kyin! (1), his hand stays stuck fast. He says: "Art thou going

[193]

1. Interjection reinforcing the meaning of a verb expressing that something has become fastened or immobilized.

to let me go, I don't want thee (here)." He struck her with the other hand, gbo! Kyin kyin! The other hand stayed stuck. He said: "I am going to give thee a poke with my knee!" He gave her a poke with his knee, kyin kyin! The knee stayed stuck fast. He hit her with the other knee, it stayed stuck too. Thus the rabbit remained immobilized, feet in the air, until the next morning. Anansi came, he said: "Rabbit, we meet again! Ever since somebody made cack in the pond, it was thou. We meet again!"

Anansi went to the king; he said: "Grand man, I have found the one who was dirtying the water, it is the rabbit! It is he who was making cack in the water. What shall I do with him? The king said: "Anansi, do as thou wish, for that water, all the people of this country use it."

Anansi said: "Very well." He lighted a fire, he made the pitch melt which was holding the rabbit, he put the rabbit in a bag, zou! He tied the bag, kwa! Next he went and got a long iron rod; he said to the rabbit: "Dost thou see this rod? Well, I am going to heat it red hot and plunge it into thine anus up to the very end. Thou wilt not dirty the king's water any more."